

CASES  
OF  
CANCER,  
WITH  
OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE USE OF  
*CARBONATE of LIME*  
IN THAT DISEASE.

---

By EDWARD KENTISH, M. D.  
AUTHOR OF THE ESSAYS ON BURNS.

---

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

PRINTED BY EDWARD WALKER, PILGRIM-STREET.

SOLD BY JOSEPH MAWMAN, POULTRY, LONDON; J. BELL,  
NEWCASTLE, AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1802.

1881

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

W. J. L. L. L.

1881

CASES  
OF  
CANCER, &c.



INTRODUCTION.

IN performing the arduous task of observing disease, it is our duty to investigate the writings of our predecessors, and to ascertain the exact point of knowledge at which our art is arrived, when we ourselves enter its lists as cultivators. In taking such a retrospective view, we find many diseases which were regarded as incurable, but which are now tractable to those who have studied the laws of our organization: yet there are many remaining which have baffled the skill and experience of those who have most attentively watched their progress. These incurable diseases of the human frame are the *terra incognita* of the map of Pathology, and it becomes the duty of an observer to register in this chart every well ascertained discovery; for new observations on a disease may be regarded as so many headlands by which the tracing of the coasts of a new-found continent is rendered proportionably easier.

In no instance has the unwearied attention of the greatest abilities been so little rewarded, as in attending the fatal progress of Open Ulcerated Cancer, affecting the female breasts. It has been a phenomenon passing before the eyes of the faculty ever since the time of Hippocrates, though our knowledge at present seems little advanced in respect to the treatment.

In the course of conducting the following cases of cancer, the encouragement which some novelty in the practice afforded, led me once to hope that I might be the fortunate individual who should release one half of the suffering part of the human species from the following dreadful sentence:—" Palliation  
 " is the lamentable fate of the desperate wretch,  
 " in whom the extension of cancer precludes am-  
 " putation. No substances internally, nor exter-  
 " nally administered, have as yet been discovered  
 " to arrest this dreadful evil. The free use of  
 " opium is the only temporary and feeble means  
 " of obtunding its inexpressible tortures, until the  
 " complete destruction of vital organization hap-  
 " pily places the sufferer beyond the reach of pain."  
 (Vide Aitken's Elements of Surgery.) But to accomplish such views it would have been necessary to have established an *institution* for the purpose of concentrating experience, if I may be allowed the term: for, on the average of my own practice, and  
 that



that of many of my well employed friends, not above one cancerous breast passes our view in a year. Thus the distance of time between the cases, prevents any connected series of comparative views of the effects of different remedies employed, with the idea of appreciating their respective utility. But the value of such an institution was lessened in recollecting the little benefit that has arisen to society from a similar attempt made at the Middlesex hospital; where, by the disinterested benevolence of the late Mr Whitbread, a ward was added, and supported, for the express purpose of receiving and giving relief to cancerous patients; an attempt highly honorable to his memory, as well as to the national character; for in no country does the opulent citizen contribute more cheerfully and feelingly to his less fortunate fellow in distress than in Britain.

Before establishing, or inviting the public to establish, an asylum for such sufferers, it occurred to me, that to concentrate misery, by drawing around me numberless objects before I could certainly relieve them, seemed a refinement of torture, which, upon reflection, I found I should be unable to bear: for though the ultimate object was sublime, yet it was uncertain. Passing therefore from the scheme of such an institution, I shall merely attempt to give a description of the cases I  
have

have seen, and an account of the means used ; hoping that such a detail may place each medical reader in the point I thought myself arrived at. Allowances I trust will be made should I fail in the attempt ; for to describe an art is difficult ; but to make an artist is impossible—he must be of his own creation. I may read Sir Joshua Reynolds on painting, but a whole life of practice is necessary to enable me to produce the same effect, by the same means. Thus I may be capable of conveying in words what I think a description ; but will any words I can use produce the effect upon the organs of my readers, that the sight, the touch, the odour, and the *tout ensemble* produced upon my own ? Here I must own I feel the insufficiency of any powers of language, nor do I think the fashionable means of coloured plates would much assist ; for the various changes from day to day, are too fleeting to be fixed. I shall therefore make the attempt in the manner which appears to me the best.

The reviewers of an essay I gave to the public, have said, that they thought I had brought the opinions of others in too great abundance. I am ever ready, and happy, to benefit from the advice of judicious critics ; but at the same time I must also claim the privilege of determining for myself. It appeared to me necessary to bring forward the contradictory opinions of others, to point out the necessity



necessity of determining some fixed laws by which we might boldly steer out of the chaotic labyrinth of doubt, to the broad sunshine of certainty. Had I in this instance been as certain of the perfection of my mode, as I was in that of Burns, I undoubtedly should have followed the same means to have made the utility of the discovery apparent, for I know of no other just way of appreciating our labors than comparing them with the labors of others on the same subject: consequently, to do this, we are under the necessity of giving a concentrated view of their works, and thus present the whole of what is known on the subject, so that the medical artist may determine the portion of merit due to each individual who has laboured at the work. But as in the present instance, I do not flatter myself that I have made such strides to certainty, I shall not trouble the reader, nor swell my page, by too elaborate a detail of former efforts, but content myself with noticing some general facts; and I shall feel myself sufficiently gratified, should I be the means of assisting others to make further advances, by which they may be enabled to overcome this mortal enemy of the fair. If the enthusiastic Burke could expect that ten thousand swords should leap from their scabbards in defence of Marie Antoinette, what champions may I not expect will arise to detect the first approaches, and resist

resist the wasteful progress of this foe to so large a portion of the sex ! It can only be accomplished by thus combining the powers of the faculty at large ; for the few opportunities that happen to an individual, even in a long life, are not sufficient for him steadily to pursue this one object to the point of certainty, which we should wish to arrive at.

There are few provincial towns, which do not boast the possession of some cancer curer. An old woman, a gardener, a blacksmith, are said to vanquish those diseases which have hitherto baffled the powers of the most enlightened champions of the healing art ! Let practitioners, who are near the habitations of such pretenders, observe, with philosophic coolness, the result of their practice ; and if, in the hands of rashness and ignorance, there should be found a powerful remedy, producing salutary effects, which in the present state of science the physician cannot produce, let them confess it. Were I in a similar situation I would so act, and use my endeavours that the individual should be rewarded, and the world benefitted. Perfection is perhaps not to be expected, while the open system of empiricism is encouraged as a source of revenue ; but it is our duty to act, and if we cannot reform abuses, we must endeavour to turn them to the greatest advantage for the public good.

I should have had great pleasure in giving a full  
and



and accurate view of all the powers which carbonate of lime is capable of exerting on the system, well knowing that such an investigation would tend to the advancement of the healing art; but a combination of circumstances of a private nature, which it is not necessary to explain, prevents me from pursuing the inquiry; I therefore am the more anxious to give the result of those effects which I have seen, with a view to excite the attention of others, who have an opportunity of elucidating the subject by experiment. To the means of prevention I should wish to call the attention of my fellow labourers; it may be a less splendid achievement to prevent disease than to cure it, but it will generally be allowed that to point out the mode of prevention is the most extensively useful. The means I have recommended for preventing the torpor of parts ending in the death of those parts, and the manner of keeping up the unity of action of the whole system, are methods which have been found so extensively useful in such a variety of diseased actions, as to merit great consideration. It is by such views as these that we shall ultimately combine the varied actions of the system, and in the end be enabled to class them under a few general laws of organized life.

## CASE.

On the third of February, 1801, I was requested to visit, in consultation with my friend Doctor Ramfay, the wife of Mr Brown, leader of the band of the North York regiment of militia. Her case seemed so deplorable that no hopes were entertained of a cure; to point out a rational palliative treatment appeared the only step we had to take.

To give an accurate idea of her disease, it will be necessary to trace it from its origin, as well as her description will serve for that purpose.

Mrs Brown, aged thirty-four, (formerly Miss Elizabeth Kempster) has been married three years. Previous to that period, she lived fourteen years with the present lady Fauconberg, as her maid. She says, about five years ago, she perceived a small tumor in her right breast, about the size of a hazel nut; but as it gave her no pain, she was not uneasy about it, nor did she make it known, or apply any thing to it. After her marriage the regiment went to Scotland; where, from changing quarters, and lodging in a damp room, she was severely afflicted with the rheumatism. About six months ago her right breast began to swell, and very shortly after the left; they both enlarged very rapidly, and had severe lancinating pains, with a  
burning



burning sensation, in them. About a month ago the right breast opened, and she applied a bread and milk poultice to it, until a few days ago, when Dr Ramsay had directed her to apply the carrot cataplasm.

The above is the description of the case previous to its falling under my cognizance. The appearances at my first visit were as follow:—the body of both breasts was firmly attached by inflammation to the pectoral muscles of each side. The whole chain of lymphatics in each axilla were studded with tumors, so buried and blended with the brachial vessels, as to render the separation of them impossible, even by the most dexterous operator. The right breast presented an ulcerated surface, about three inches and a half one way, and an inch and a half the other, through which protruded an excrescence of the size and shape of half a pickled walnut, situated about an inch from the areola, on its superior and exterior part. The papillæ of each were much depressed, and there was an ulceration round that of the left. The left breast was attached to the skin in two places, which carried the appearance of speedily becoming in the state of the right. The patient appeared delicate in her general health, and had frequently hot and cold fits during the day. Until this period, from the time of her arriving at the age of puberty,



she had always been regular in her periodical changes. From the fairness of her complexion, the delicacy of her skin, and the affection of the lymphatic system, there can be no doubt in ranking her in the class of scrofulous habits.

The above is the state in which I found her, with her previous description of the disease. I shall now proceed to narrate the progress of her complaint, from that period, to its ultimate termination in what was beyond my most sanguine expectations, namely, a PERFECT CICATRIX.

The excrescence, which was formed by several of the glands of which the whole mammary gland is composed, came away and left a deep ugly ulcer, secreting a thin foetid ichor, which corroded the living fibres of the adjoining skin and cellular membrane, of which the adjacent parts are composed, forming that peculiar and malignant state of sore, termed CANCER, and which hitherto has resisted all surgical and medical treatment. The remaining glands of the congeries turned out of their beds one after another ; and at the end of about a month the whole had come away, and left that particular deep and unequal surfaced wound peculiar to cancer, the interstitial pieces of adipose membrane, assuming the mulberry like excrescences so characteristic of this sore, as universally described by all accurate surgical writers.

A frequent hemorrhage from the small nourishing arteries took place. This ranks it among what the people term bleeding cancers. During this sloughing stage, she complained of a good deal of pain ; but the sensation of burning or scalding was more troublesome than any lancinating pains. The left breast during this period was also much swelled, and a thin ichorous discharge or oozing from around the nipple, threatened the same scene as had taken place in the right. But the discharge of the fore of the right breast becoming more bland, the pain of the left breast gradually ceased with that of the right ; the discharge insensibly became more puriform ; and at the end of the second month, I had the extreme satisfaction of perceiving NEW CUTICLE forming down the perpendicular sides of this terrific ulcer. Such a mixture of beauty and ugliness is only capable of being conceived by a medical artist ; or at least he only is capable of judging of my feelings during such a process—UNIQUE in my practice and observation. The progress of cicatrization proceeded all round the circumference to the centre, nor did it cease until it had completed a cure. The part remained like an inverted cone, or rather like the crater of a volcano.

I am not yet able particularly to note all the laws, or mention the varieties of the powers of nature,



nature, during the process of cure in cancer, as my experience is not yet sufficient for the necessary comparisons; but this I know, that no fore I ever attended, proceeded on the laws this case has followed. If I may be allowed the expression, the skin precipitated itself down the perpendicular sides of the fore, at right angles with the surface of the true skin and adjacent cuticle.

### CASE.

ANN FAIRBRIDGE, aged fifty-four, applied to me in the month of April, 1801, on account of a tumor she had in the right breast. She had undergone the routine of remedies suggested by her benevolent neighbours, without any beneficial effect, and had consulted other medical advice, among the rest Mr Horn, who, with the candour so peculiarly his characteristic, suggested to her the propriety of an operation. The timidity of her disposition prevented her compliance with his advice; and having heard of Mrs Brown's case, she was induced to consult me, saying she could submit to any thing but the operation. I informed her the result of Mrs Brown's case was what I had never before seen; that there might be some peculiarity in it  
which



which I could not account for ; and that her case might not terminate so favorably ; yet as she was so anxious, I promised her that I would treat her case as similarly to Mrs B's as the nature of the disease would admit ; and that every relative care should be taken of her, during the treatment, which circumstances might dictate. To this offer she heartily gave her consent, and I accordingly took the charge of her.

To convey a clearer idea of the whole of this case, I shall relate her previous history ; the state she was in, when I commenced my attendance, and the appearances through the different stages, to the termination. Her life was spent in service. She had been much troubled with chronic rheumatism, a complaint to which the family had a predisposition ; one of her sisters having had it to such a degree, as to have misplaced most of the joints of her hands. The menstrual flux ceased with her about two years ago ; after which she enjoyed a much better state of health, than she had ever done previously to that period. All her rheumatic pains had left her, and she thought herself perfectly well. Alas ! how transient is health, or happiness ; the equal diffusion of healthy action, and agreeable sensation, through the whole system, lasted little longer than a twelvemonth ! This equal action was followed by the torpor, obstruction,

tion, and ultimate death of a part of the mammary organization.

About eight months prior to this application, her attention was drawn to the breast, in consequence of frequent darting pains through it. Her feelings induced her to examine it, and she felt a small tumor, rather deeply seated in her right breast. It rapidly increased in size, and became more painful; all the efforts to retard its progress, or assuage the torment, were ineffectual. When I first saw it, the papilla was considerably retracted; the tumor seemed to include the whole congeries of glands, and from about two inches and a half from the nipple on the exterior and superior part of the breast, formed an elevation. In this part the integuments were inflamed, and the tumor felt as if nailed to the side.

With the intention of giving every chance to the patient, and to try the efforts of the absorbent vessels upon the tumor, an alterative course of medicines was exhibited, with the modified use of the vapor bath (as a tepid one) that is, the heat not more than 94, or 96 degrees. These means arrested the progress, and relieved the pain of the disease, but were found inadequate to produce more than palliative effects.

The impossibility of reducing the tumor, and  
her



her determination not to submit to its being extirpated by the knife, induced me to make the attempt of reducing it to the same state as Mrs Brown's. I therefore applied a strong caustic upon the tumor, large enough to produce an eschar, to enable me to act upon the diseased part to the bottom, as far as its attachment to the pectoral muscle. This was very slow in separating. In about a month the eschar came off, the caustic having very effectually gone through the investing integuments. The wound looked healthy and well round the edges. In the center there remained a firm fibrous eschar about the size of a shilling, and of a dusky yellow colour. Round the edges of this, I applied the caustic powder, with an armed probe, upon lint; which in about a fortnight more brought me to the bottom. At the end of six weeks the whole surface of the wound looked healthy; the pus was laudable; the skinning process was beginning from the bottom of the wound, which was upon the pectoral muscle, and ascended up the side towards the superior part of the fore. For a fortnight the appearances were daily more gratifying.

At this period nothing could exceed the pleasure I received from the progress of the case. The new skin forming from the bottom, to the size of a finger nail, with the same beautiful plumb bloom, as in Mrs B's case, gave me hopes that the power of



overcoming the deadly effects of cancerous action was at length discovered. The wound was firm and healthy, and every cancerous appearance had vanished. After such flattering prospects, I shall not attempt to relate what I felt in the subsequent part of the treatment. The sudden vanishing of such well-founded hopes, produced sensations in an ardent mind, which it is easier to conceive than to describe.

From this time the wound became stationary. In about a week more, the upper part next the clavicle appeared more irritable than the other parts of the fore ; the lymphatic vessels passing over the clavicle became thickened and corded, so as easily to be traced by the touch, both on the neck, towards the head, and in the axilla down the arm. In a short time after this appearance of the affection of the lymphatic system, the limb began to swell, commencing at the ends of the fingers, and gradually ascending up to the shoulder, and the arm became very large and unwieldy. Some oleum camphoratum was applied to guard the skin, and a flannel roller to support the integuments. From the stiffness and size of her arm, she was prevented from lying in bed, and the last month of her existence she passed in an arm-chair, with her legs laid upon a stool. From this position her lower extremities began to be œdematous ; and as her  
cloaths

cloaths were not taken off at night, the increase of the swelling was not noticed to me, until there appeared to be a considerable discharge from her left leg. On examination, the whole limb was much enlarged, from lymphatic effusion ; an inflammation appeared below the calf ; several vesicles were broken, and some gangrenous spots were visible. As she had, during the course of the disease, been allowed the use of wine, and had latterly taken bark, little more could be done than to palliate. A rag spread with cerate was applied to the part, and repeated daily. The excoriation of the skin on the leg was troublesome ; and she complained of great heat and scalding in that part, similar to what she felt in the breast. It was about two months from the first application of the caustic, that the lymphatic system took up the diseased action above described. About the same time the discharge from the breast became less puriform, and more abundant in quantity ; the new skin was destroyed ; and the discharge excoriated the edges of the sore, which communicated an erysipelatous action to the cutis, in the direction of the axilla. The burning sensation from this cause added considerably to her sufferings, and kept up a constant hectic, which considerably hastened the period of her dissolution. The wound during this stage became deteriorated in its appearance ; and as there



never was any discharge of blood from the wound, the powers of her system were quite exhausted by the fever kept up from the irritation of the sore, and this brought on such debility, that a distant surface, irritated by a mechanical cause, took on the same painful erysipelatous action as the primarily diseased part, and had its share in wearing down her frame, which ceased its vital functions early in August, 1801, after a treatment of three months, during which I had well-founded hopes of a different termination : but the duty I have ever imposed upon myself, of noticing what I think may be useful, induces me to give a statement of my unsuccessful, as well as successful endeavours ; for it is the same principle that urges them both.

### MODE OF TREATMENT.

Having given the history of these cases, and conducted one of them to that desired ultimatum, a cure, it will be necessary to delineate the means used to produce that effect. In reviewing the case it will be seen, that the treatment must divide itself into two heads, viz. general, and local. The most urgent symptoms of the first class, were the tumefaction of the glands in the left breast, and in each axilla, as also the general debility of the subject.



ject. With a view of equalizing the action of the glandular system, and to prevent the engorgement which had already taken place in various glands, terminating in the death of those parts, I was induced to use the vapor bath. It may here be necessary to explain my reasons for this practice. Vapor baths in this country are not at all common; they, in general, have been in the hands of empirics, and very frequently misapplied; consequently have done much harm: but though an active power, capable of doing injury, when differently modified, they are capable of producing much good. From the solvent power of steam upon inanimate vegetable and animal matter, the idea of applying it (by means of vapor baths) to the discussion of hard tumors of various characters, has taken its rise. To effect this the more readily, the hotter they were applied, the sooner it was expected to complete a cure. If for local swellings, short of scalding was the rule; if to the whole body, as hot as the patient could bear, short of fainting in the bath. The profuse perspiration at the time; the immediate faintness, and the subsequent debility attending such discipline, will easily account for the prejudice against vapor bathing. Though it requires 212 degrees of heat to convert water into steam, yet it may be applied in that state  
at

at a very bearable temperature. I have found the vapor bath sufficiently full of steam at so low a temperature as 60 degrees. When total immersion of the body (except the head) is used, I in general apply it at about 94 degrees. In this state it is little more heating than a warm bath of the same standard; though in my opinion much more powerful in its discutient effects. Probably at this temperature the absorbents may imbibe the fluid more readily; and its powers may be carried into the system beyond the mere superficial application. The action of a bath of this kind upon the body appears to be as follows:—The applying of an equal stimulus of heat over the whole surface of the body, induces an equal action upon the surface, upon the heart, and upon all the other corresponding and sympathizing parts. It would lead me too far to enter into the proof of this at present; but I am in possession of facts from personal experiments, which have led me to these conclusions, and I hope, on a future occasion, to make them self-evident to all unprejudiced observers. With this view of the subject, I am induced frequently to use the vapor bath, when there appears to be a torpor of any part of the system, by which means I have frequently the pleasure of seeing a unity of action restored, or parts restored to the system, which, had they not been so treated, would probably



bably have caused the death of the whole, as is generally the case in cancer of the breast, uterus, and sometimes of other parts.

The famous Dominiceti, and Dr Kelly, have both asserted, that they have cured many cases of cancer by the use of their vapor baths. To accept, or refute these assertions, it will be first necessary to come to a definition of what we deem cancer. In looking over the works of medical nosologists, I find none of them express the views I have of the disease; I must, therefore, beg permission to describe what I mean.

In the female subject the parts destined for the continuation of the species, unfold themselves at the maturity of the individual, and continue in that state until their decadence, when they ought to close, and continue, during the existence of the individual, as they were prior to their evolution. In passing through these stages, they are liable to a variety of complaints, but with those we are not now occupied. It is towards the decline, or after the meridian of life, when the system seems upon the collapse, that the peculiar diseased action denominated cancer, generally attacks the subject. I mean here only to treat of the cancerous mammæ of the female subject, as sores denominated cancerous, and happening promiscuously to either sex, as upon the lip or tongue, I deem a diseased  
action



action of a very different nature, and which consequently would require a separate investigation.

Few patients attacked with cancer can give much information respecting its origin. Some say that they have had indurations without pain, for years; others have not been sensible of such obstructions, and have only been attacked with swelling and uneasiness for a short period prior to their application. In some I have observed the first painful symptom has been from the shortening of one, or more, of the *tubulæ lactiferæ*. This thickening of these tubes causes a retrocession of the papilla, and draws the attention of the patient to the part. Whether the obstruction of the gland causes the irritation of the tube, or the tube that of the gland, I am unable to ascertain. I have, at different times, had both opinions. The former appears probable, as in many extirpated hardened *mammæ*, I have observed pus secreted in different parts of the gland, without having irritated the whole of the milk tubes leading to those parts. From this stage of the retrocession of the papilla, the progress of the complaint varies in every individual subject, until it arrives at the state of open cancer; and also from that period to its final termination. This variation, in each particular individual, depends upon the different constitutions, as they are more or less irritable, and obnoxious to particular

particular diseases : for instance, it frequently happens, that a subject who has been much troubled with the diseased actions of different sentient parts, termed chronic rheumatism, will on a sudden be relieved from all those complaints ; but in a few months she finds a painful induration in her breast, with the retraction of the nipple. There then we have the first stage of cancer formed. In subjects thus affected it appears more than nature can do, to keep up the healthy unity of action over the whole system ; for, when by an unobserved cause, a healthy action is produced in parts accustomed to disease, a torpor takes place in a less sentient part, producing obstruction, and the subsequent death of the part.

I have mentioned the cessation of rheumatism as a cause which I have had an opportunity of observing myself. I am supported in this fact by the observation of many practitioners of eminence, and among the rest the late Dr Fothergill. Should the theory by which I have ventured to explain this alternation be founded in truth, it will readily be admitted, that the cessation of many other habitual diseased actions may tend to the same unfortunate effect.

Not only has the fact of cancer succeeding the cessation of rheumatism been remarked, but a medical friend, of whose observation I have the highest opinion, has assured me that he has known the



inverse of this take place, viz. A lady who had had no previous disease, was attacked with cancer, which was successfully extirpated and healed; but in a short time afterwards, she was afflicted with rheumatism, which assumed the chronic type; and she remained troubled with this diseased action, which increased so much, as to confine her to her bed during the last years of her life.

From these observations we are led to conclude, that females, who have been subject to chronic rheumatism, are disposed to take on the cancerous action: and again, that those who have undergone the cancerous action, are disposed to take on the rheumatic. We should therefore warn those with such dispositions, to avoid whatever may break in upon their limited sphere of healthy action.

Cancerous affections of the mammæ will divide themselves into two stages. The first will include all the phenomena, from the torpor of the part, until it ends in the partial death of the gland, and ulceration commences. From this point the second stage will arise, which continues until the dead part is either taken away by art, or thrown off by nature, and a cicatrix formed; or it remains until the corrosive solution of the dead part assimilates the living to itself, and preys upon the subject, who wears out a painful existence by hectic fever.

This division of cancerous affections into two  
stages



stages will considerably assist us, when we take a philosophic view of the best means to be used with the intention of removing the diseased action in each of the stages.

A recent publication by Dr. Joseph Adams, of Madeira, author of *Observations on Morbid Poisons*, has fallen into my hands. It is intitled *Observations on the Cancerous Breast*, and consists of letters to and from the author, and some of the first physiologists of the present day. Coming from such able hands, I shall give a short account of these recent ideas.

Dr. Adams prefixes to his correspondence, a paper by Dr. John Hunter, F. R. S. giving an account of the dissection of a man, who died of a suppression of urine, produced by a collection of hydatids, between the neck of the bladder, and the rectum; with observations on the manner in which hydatids grow, and multiply in the human body. It appears from the case, as related, that several tumors containing hydatids, had been generated in the lower part of the spleen, and as they became more unfolded from their original nidus, had sunk down, insinuating themselves into the cellular membrane, and lodging themselves in such quantities between the bladder and the rectum, as to bring on the fatal suppression. The structure of the hydatids was the same in both great and small; a

transparent bag, uniformly round and smooth, filled with clear water. They consisted of two coats, or layers, and were perfectly spherical, neither adhering to any sack, nor were they united to each other. Some of them appeared of an amber colour, and the coats of these were thicker. Upon opening them, their internal coats were studded with smaller, or young, ones, about the size of a pin's head. Some of the water in which these small ones floated, was examined by the microscope, and found to contain a quantity of minute hydatids swimming in it. When once an hydatid has found its nest, the further progress of this species of vermes appears to depend on its own laws. It expands itself, and is pregnant with a young brood: at length they issue forth, and the parent animal loses its existence, and shrinks into a substance resembling isinglass. Hydatids of this kind, viz. round transparent bags, like small white grapes, have been discharged from various parts of the body, by vomit and stool; (Phil. Trans. vol. xxii. page 1797;) from the breast by coughing; (Med. Trans. vol. ii. page 486;) from the bladder by urine, and from tumors in different parts of the body. (Phil. Trans. vol. xv. page 2344.) Hydatids of this description, Dr Adams denominates *hydatis lymphatica*; and when their contents are tinged with red blood, he terms them *hydatis cruenta*.

Hydatids



Hydatids have been found in the brains of sheep, and have been observed to move, which has constituted them animalcules; and these animalcules have been found exactly to resemble the hydatids in the human liver. The motion of these constitutes the proof of their separate existence. The contraction of the *hydatis lymphatica* in throwing out its contents when punctured, proves its motion, and thus its separate life. On a parity of proof and reasoning, Dr Adams contends for the existence of the *hydatis carcinomatosa*. He says, take a breast immediately after amputation, and make a transverse section through the increased fatty appearance of the tumor, and it at first looks perfectly smooth; but, upon an instant attention, you will find the yellow greenish fat assume a papillary form. On examination he thinks it will be found, that each of these papillæ is the contents of a capsule or bag, the contraction of which forms the above appearance; and this contraction he supposes to arise from the separate vitality of each of these capsules as animalcules, and not from any elasticity as a part of the living subject.

From the various proofs we have of the real existence of animalcules in different living animals, whether under the appearance of vermes or hydatids, in the brain, in the liver (as of sheep) or in different parts of the body, it behoves us to receive  
the



the opinions of others, in matters of such importance, with unprejudiced attention, more particularly so, when the united efforts of the first abilities have been employed upon this arduous investigation, from the earliest records of the history of our art. For my own part, I confess that the idea of insects causing the disease, as mentioned by Justamond, (vide his account of the methods pursued in the treatment of cancerous and schirrhous disorders, page 66, et seq.) and entertained by a German, and an Italian author, appeared to me fanciful. He supposes that the absorbents take up the germina from the air, and are thus introduced into the system. Whether we receive the ova of animalcules by absorption from the air, or from our food, as is supposed to be done in our drink on the coast of Guinea, or from what other source, I know not; but it appears that all nature is so pregnant with life, that one animal no sooner loses its individual power of existence, than it serves as a nidus for thousands of other existences: nay further, if the animal do not keep up the unity of life, the dead portion may abound with germinating ova, and the situation of that part may give rise to a generation which will declare war upon the body; and, as in cancer, either require forcible expulsion, or, wearing down the subject, cause its death. This is strongly illustrated by a case related

lated in the first volume of the new series of the Journal de Medicine, &c. for the year nine. A healthy man of thirty received a violent blow on the region of the liver, which gave him much pain; but, on that ceasing, he paid no further attention to it. In about a year a swelling took place in the part where he had received the injury, and continued to increase in spite of every effort to prevent it. This brought on a marasmus, which wore him out in about six years. On opening the body the large lobe of the liver was occupied by a tenia hydatigena, the contents of which were five quarts of a clear liquor. It seems to have been solitary, as no mention is made of any smaller ones appearing. There was neither pus, nor inflammation in the part. Might it not be inferred from this history, that as the violence was insufficient to excite the suppurative action, the torpor, or partial death of a part of the viscus, allowed the unfolding of the ovum of the tenia, which the vital principle, during the unity of life, had been capable of subduing.

From this view of the matter, we see the necessity of keeping up the unity of life. In a former essay (vide Essay on Burns) I shewed, that to preserve health, it was necessary to keep up a certain unity of action.

Dr Adams carries his ideas of the animalcular  
existence



existence of tumors still further. He supposes that steatoma, atheroma, and meliceris, are all of this class; or, in fact, that all encysted tumors, whose cyst and contents have no communication with the surrounding blood-vessels, enjoy an œconomy similar to the *hydatis lymphatica*. In addition to these ideas, and confirming the necessity of a unity of action, we learn from practitioners in tropical climates, that cancer is scarcely known among the natives; and the slow progress of the disease in those who have carried it to a warm climate, would lead us to conclude that such a removal was the most adviseable palliative. Dr Adams remarks, that in the mild climate of Madeira, he had only seen two occult, and one ulcerated cancer, and that the whole had been of above twenty years standing, and rarely accompanied with pain.

These observations confirm me still further in the utility of the tepid, or modified vapor bath, by means of which the salutary effects of a happier clime may be produced in our less genial atmosphere. As a cautionary practice at that peculiar period of life, when females are the most exposed to local engorgements, or partial death of parts, on the conservation of which their future happiness depends, as sensitive beings, nothing can be more salutary than a frequent course of tepid bathing, together with a judicious use of occasional alteratives; so as



to keep up the unity of action of the parts with the whole. Were these means properly employed, many victims might be snatched from this disease, and many experienced and enlightened mothers preserved to their families, at a period when their anxious sollicitude, joined to their knowledge of the world, is rendered highly necessary to their offspring, to assist them in treading the devious and thorny path of civilized life.

Whenever any part of the body becomes torpid, and ceases to perform its functions, coating the system, as it were, with that most diffusible of all metallic substances, mercury, seems to be the readiest means we possess of restoring a unity of action to the whole. This explains to us why mercury cures such a variety of diseases arising from torpor in such different parts of the system—it blends the whole together, and equalizes life. In the hands of a skilful practitioner it is a blessing to mankind ; yet the abuse of it is one of the greatest curses to which the human frame is liable. Its friendly action may be greatly assisted by other means, but more particularly by tepid vapor, and water baths. A smaller quantity, with these helps, will produce the wished-for effect. The equalizing action of the one unites and assists the other. I must here observe that I have had several patients, who, by a gentle course of alteratives, and the use

of the vapor bath at 96, have had indurated tumors of the mammary glands perfectly dispersed. I number among these fortunate persons, ladies between the ages of forty and fifty, as well as young persons who had tumors from accidents.

### OF THE LOCAL MEANS.

On looking over Mrs Brown's case, it will immediately occur to the reader that I could have no other view in ordering an application to the part, than an intention of soothing her sufferings, with the least possible trouble and expence, both to the patient and attendant.

My experience in private practice; my observations in public hospitals; and the result of my reading, offered me many costly and elaborate applications, prepared from the different kingdoms of nature, of which much was promised in the reports of those who had invented, or used them; but when I considered their effects, as used by others, or the nothingness they produced, when under my own direction, I found little inducement to repeat what had formerly ended in disappointment; and no great inclination to apply the incongruous compounds which I had not yet seen tried, although they



they were regarded by their inventors, and announced by them, as specifics.

Being thus unprejudiced in favor of any known application, I felt myself at liberty to adopt any which experience or analogy might suggest. On revolving the matter in my mind, I was induced to think of the carbonate of lime, by having seen very evident beneficial effects from its liberal use in extensive sores, where the secretion was abundant, and not good. An account of some of those cases I have already communicated in my second Essay on Burns, and others of greater magnitude, and of more decisive advantage, I have had an opportunity of observing in my practice since that period.

It will perhaps be pardoned by my medical readers, should I digress here, and give an account of a case in which it proved of the greatest use, and which happened just at the period when the cancer case occurred; and in fact, formed that link in the analogy which urged me to the use of the carbonate. Such is the apology I offer, which I can readily suppose will be accepted by the medical philosopher, as he will be enabled by these means to trace the catenation of ideas which brought me to the point where I wish to place him.

A lady having approached too near the fire, her cloaths unfortunately enflamed, by which means

she was very severely burnt in various parts of her body. The tremendous shock of such an alarming situation, both upon the subject and her immediate attendants, produced such an effect on their nervous systems, as required considerable stimuli to restore them to the collected state, so desirable in such emergencies. Besides the moral effect of fear, the lady experienced extensive physical disorganization, particularly on the integuments covering the calf of the leg, where an eschar was formed as large as the palm of the hand, which, when it separated from the living parts beneath, exposed the muscular fibres of the *gastrocnemii* muscles. It will be unnecessary for me to relate the means I used to urge the system to perform the arduous duty of ridding itself from this dead part, as I have already amply detailed them in my *Essays on Burns*; it will be sufficient to remark, that the whole scope of treatment, as there recommended, was fully put into practice, and with the happiest effects; for I have no hesitation in saying, that life in this case was so nearly balanced, that had the practice been less energetic on the same plan, or the old means adopted, death would have been the result.

During a process of such magnitude to the system, and which continued for so long a period of time as from six weeks to two months, a variety of appearances must have taken place on the secreting surface.



surface. Sores from whatever cause they arise, have their appearances dependent both on the general health of the body, and the local health of the part. Whoever has been accustomed to attend an hospital will have observed that at certain periods the slightest wounds have such a tendency to degenerate, that the most judicious local treatment is lost upon them. I have observed at the Hotel Dieu in Paris, that patients with lacerated wounds, after operations which were performed with address, have when apparently doing well, suddenly degenerated, and the injured parts have assumed that characteristic fore, now beginning to be well known by the appellation of Hospital fore. In England I have observed that this is much less frequent than in France, \* though in looking over the reports

\* I believe this arises from the different treatment, as well as from the badness of the air of an hospital. The English surgeons, in general, do not deplete so much as was the custom in France, after any accident. In this, I believe, they are right. The astonishing success I have met with in my treatment of Burns, and the united testimonies of its efficacy by some of the first surgeons, must naturally have produced a considerable effect on my practice in other parts of surgery. I have many cases in my note book which convince me that the whole treatment of external medicine must and will undergo as great and as beneficial changes as I have been fortunate enough to produce in this. I hope further opportunity and leisure will enable me to point out this more fully.

ports of the different hospitals in England, we find a great variety in the result of the same operations. From the general diffusion of knowledge, and from the known ability of most of our surgeons in county hospitals, there is every reason to suspect, that this difference depends upon the same cause in our island, as it did upon the continent, viz. upon the ill construction of the older hospitals, or infirmaries, in which the patients were crowded together in ill ventilated wards, generating a virulent and contagious disease; so that our benevolent institutions, instead of a blessing, became a curse, and formed a focus of deadly poison. We are informed by various authorities that this sore annually visits the wards of the Edinburgh infirmary; and scarcely a year passes but several students fall a sacrifice to the propagation of typhus from the same cause.

Similar pernicious sources of disease having exerted their baneful influence on our hospital (Newcastle upon Tyne) lately drew the attention of that observing, experienced, and benevolent physician, Dr Clark, who undertook an extensive correspondence with the most distinguished medical characters in the kingdom, from which he has not only been enabled to point out the defects, but to suggest the remedies best adapted to render the hospital one of the most complete of its size in this country.



try. He has also exerted himself with the supporters of the charity, and a liberal subscription has been raised for the improvements he has recommended. He will have the satisfaction of seeing this pile consecrated to humanity, and his reward must be confined to his own breast. But why? Would it be less becoming an enlightened legislature and government to confer dignities on the men who by laborious exertions have acquired, and exert, talents to lessen the mass of human woes, than upon those whose cruel fate obliges them to sacrifice hecatombs of their fellow creatures in performing what is termed their duty!!! Or is it wise not to take the advantage of the moral stimulus which such a civic crown would give to the quantity of intellect tending to the same point? These changes I have no doubt will insure the patients from the contagious effects of the hospital fore; yet though this disease may not be generated, sores will always partake of the general health of the patient; and any cold, or feverish disposition, no where shews itself so soon as on a secreting surface. I had ample occasion to remark this in the case I am relating, for when the suppuration had been established, and the eschar was separating itself from the living fibres, on a sudden the nature of the discharge was changed, as also the appearance of the wound. The former was thin, ferous,

rather

rather curdly, and tinged with blood : the latter looked paler, and the eschar had the ash colour with that close firm attachment, which is so alarming in mortification. These changes took place from an attack of fever ; not from the symptomatic fever which arises from the first excitement of such an accident ; but from a secondary fever, as we sometimes observe in bad cases of natural small-pox. As suppuration had been well established by the eighth day, and my patient had shewn an aversion to medicine, wine, and the other stimuli, which I had plentifully given in the first instance, I had allowed her to follow her own inclination ; but on the 12th day I was alarmed by the changes I have already noted : her fever, restlessness, and thirst, at this period of the disease were excessive, and I was again obliged to have recourse to the stimulants, to excite her system to healthy action. At first they appeared to aggravate the febrile symptoms ; but by continuing their use, secretion was the result ; and in eight and forty hours after this second fever, a moist tongue, and a laudable pus on the wound, again announced the safety of my patient. Such was the sympathy of the mouth, with the surface of the fore, that I could ascertain the state of the one by the bare inspection of the other : in short, I have ever looked upon a wound as an excellent index to point out the state of the body.

We



We seem by such inspection to get within the external boundaries of the system, and to be present at the secret councils of nature. The light which external medicine reflects upon the internal actions of the body, or those actions which are controlled by internal agents, whether they class in the *materia medica*, or as culinary means, is very great. Perhaps at some future period when the re-union of surgery and medicine shall take place (as it has already in France) our most valuable observations may be drawn from this source. But to return. The secretion being again established, became abundant, so much so, that I was obliged to have it dressed twice a day. In this state I found the greatest efficacy from the free use of carbonate of lime. It was applied half an inch thick, morning and evening, in bare contact with the sore. This covering repressed the growth of fungus in the central part of the wound, and encouraged the formation of cuticle at the edges. It appeared as if the lime, uniting with the secretion of the cellular membrane, formed a pearly coating, similar to the lining of oyster shells, or probably like shelling in the case of birds. Nor does it seem improbable that the process of skinning, like that of shelling, may be considerably assisted by the addition of lime, either as a carbonate, or as a phosphate. Birds at the laying season, as canaries, are incapable of supplying a sufficient quantity

of calcareous matter, unless they have a supply of it with their food. Hens, I am informed, if prevented from this supply, lay eggs without shells. Marine animals secrete much calcareous matter; the annual renewal of their shells proves this. The whole bony fabric of animals has lime for its basis, and the secretion in some cases of fractures is very abundant, as is also the want of this principle in some cases of mollities ossium. If lime make so great a part of the animal as the bony system, and if the want of it prevent the purposes of nature being carried into effect, as is observed in birds, it is highly probable that in some old obstinate ulcerations, benefit might be derived from giving this principle internally, as well as from its external use.\*

Carbonate of lime seems to act in more capacities than one; for it not only coagulates the secretion around the circumference of the wound, and thus lays the basis of the cuticle or shell, but it absorbs the redundant secretion in a more perfect manner than the substance which has been so long in use among surgeons, I mean the lint, or charpie, with which

\* The utility of lime, externally applied, is illustrated even in the vegetable world. The famous composition which Mr Forsyth, the king's gardener, at Kensington, applied to the wounds of forest trees, owes its power to the carbonate of lime, from the rubbish of old plastered walls.



which it is the custom to fill all wounds. I have used it with this intention in numerous instances with the best effect. It also corrects the fœtor arising from ill-conditioned wounds. Carbonic acid has long been esteemed as a corrective in all putrid diseases, and was expressly recommended in cancerous cases by the late Dr Ewart of Bath. I have applied it in the manner he recommended ; but there is an insuperable objection to the continued use of gaseous fluids to ulcerated surfaces ; that is, the want of pressure, which is so necessary to support those parts. I shall notice this when I come to speak of Mr Baynton's method of treating ulcers. The product of wounds is so unpleasant for chemical experiment, that I am unable to assert whether the carbonate of lime is useful from its being decomposed, and giving out its acid in a nascent state, as was suggested to me by an ingenious chemist, (Mr Stancliffe) or merely as an absorbent. Charcoal is highly spoken of by Mr Sandford, of the Worcester infirmary, as possessing nearly the same properties which I have found in the carbonate of lime ; but as the latter is much the more cleanly substance, I have been led to prefer its use in most cases, and can therefore better appreciate its value : and though I have sometimes used charcoal, yet not sufficiently to enable me to draw a just comparison : but in whatever way the effect may be explained, I now only vouch for the fact of utility.

The shelly lamina which quickly formed round the wound of my burnt patient, and served as the cuticle, pleased me so much, that I was induced to apply the carbonate in the case of Mrs Brown. The deep foul ulcer which presented itself, when the mammary glands were thrown off, left a very considerable void. This was filled up to the level of the adjoining cuticle, with very fine levigated and prepared creta. The foetor of the discharge became less; the matter was also of a better consistence, and in smaller quantity. In clearing away the incrusted edges of the sore with a spatula, after having taken away several coatings, I had the extreme pleasure of perceiving the shelly pellicle forming upon the cellular membrane, at an acute angle with the cuticle. The wound was dressed once a day; and at the end of a month, I first began to observe this appearance. From such an effort, I became extremely anxious to second the endeavours of nature. Some fungusses which appeared to obstruct this process, yielded to reiterated applications of alumen ustum, over which the creta as usual was applied. There still remained some points where the ulcers continued rebellious, notwithstanding the application of the alumen. To give them a new surface, which I was in hopes I should be enabled to cicatrice, I applied, by means of a probe armed with lint, and moistened, some of Plunket's powder, made according



according to the recipe in the *Pharmacopeia Chirurgica*. By this means I was enabled just to touch the points of the sore, which appeared to me to require it. I afterwards put on the powdered creta as before. The arsenical powder prevented the growth of fungus.

Among the modern improvements in surgery, none is of more use than the healing by the first intention, so beautifully illustrated by the experiments of the justly celebrated John Hunter. This principle has been very properly applied to operations on the breast, by the ingenious Mr Fearon: but the greatest improvement or extension of this principle, to what I would term healing by the second intention, has been made by the ingenious Mr Baynton, of Bristol. This application of adhesive plasters to secreting wounds, and drawing the edges of ulcers together, to assist their union, by borrowing the adjoining natural covering, and leaving the least possible cicatrix, may probably lead medical men to inquire into and use the power they possess upon the absorbent system, by means of various sorts of bandages; an inquiry which would considerably benefit both the art and the artist.

When the glands in Mrs Brown's case had come away, and left the deep ulcer already described, I made use of Mr Baynton's method of straps of plaster, with a view of bringing the edges nearer  
in

in contact. I have since thought that I was more indebted to this mode than I had at first supposed. I believe it prevented the thickening of the edges, and kept up the balance of the absorbent vessels; by which means the secretion was lessened, and the shelling by the use of creta facilitated. In the case of Fairbridge, as it is related in page 18, the irritation of the lymphatic vessels running over the clavicle, and communicating up the neck and down the arm, was considerably increased by, if it did not arise from the erysipelatous inflammation around the sore. The swelling of the hand and arm are symptoms not noticed by any author I have met with, except in a paper in the sixth volume of the Medical and Physical Journal, by that attentive and eminent surgeon, Mr Simmons, of Manchester. His account of the sympathy of the hand and breast, is so similar to what I observed in my patient, that when I read the one, I find it an exact description of the other. I should wish to draw the attention of practitioners to this symptom; for as it has happened in these two cases, I should suppose it would appear in medical writings more frequently, were it attentively recorded. As I am writing this merely for the information of the profession, I shall criticise my own practice with as much severity, as I would that of any other practitioner, well aware that frequently in a conjectural art, the readiest way to arrive at truth, is to



to confess the steps we have wandered from it. With this intention I confess, that according to my present ideas, I did not use Baynton's method, in the second case, with the perseverance I ought to have done. The success in one case, and the want of it in the other, have made me reflect on the causes why the same effect was not produced in both cases. The principal, I apprehend, was the neglect of supporting the integuments, because the skinning process took place at the bottom of the wound, and the mischief seemed to spread from the edges, causing the irritation of the lymphatics, and exciting erysipelatous action.

If future experience prove that the artificial pressure of adhesive plaster, applied after the manner of Baynton, will supply the want of the natural pressure of the uninjured integuments, thereby keeping up the equal action of the absorbents and exhalents, we may look upon its application as one of the most valuable of the modern discoveries. This principle, with the application of carbonate of lime in assisting the skinning process, appeared to me of so much consequence, and of such general application in surgery, that I felt it a duty to give the foregoing account, hoping it may lead to those conclusions which may advance our art, and increase our power of doing good.

---

Though from what has been already said, I am  
not

not warranted in looking upon the use of carbonate of lime as a specific, yet it appears to me to merit the utmost attention of the faculty, not only in cancer, but in various other obstinate sores. It should again awaken the hope, that even open cancerous breasts, which have suffered ravages beyond the reach of the knife, may have their surfaces and secretions so altered by the use of various caustic substances, that the subsequent use of carbonate of lime may be enabled to form a new shell or cuticle upon their surface. I do not mean to argue against the extirpation of the breast in some cases : on the contrary, I am fully sensible of its utility, in our present uncertain state of knowledge upon this subject. I only wish not to dash the cup of hope from the lips of those, who have not the courage to submit to the operation, and to call the faculty again to the charge, in hopes of victory. The success of the alterative plan, in the first stages, I should hope, would induce an early application from the individual threatened with this disease ; so that timely attention may prevent the death of the obstructed part, and that it may again be added to the system, so as to preserve the unity and health of the whole.

*FINIS.*

